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ABSTRACT

Intended for producers of educational materials, the document offers guidelines to assure that print and nonprint educational materials reflect a positive, fair, and balanced representation of persons with exceptionalities. Nine guidelines are discussed: (1) 10% of the contents should include or represent children or adults with an exceptionality; (2) there should be representation of persons with exceptionalities at all levels and in all areas of study; (3) representation of persons with exceptionalities should be accurate and free from stereotypes; (4) persons with exceptionalities should be shown in the least restrictive environment, participating in activities in a manner that will include them as a part of society; (5) in describing persons with exceptionalities, the language used should be nondiscriminatory and free from value judgments; (6) persons with and without exceptionalities should be shown interacting in ways that are mutually beneficial; (7) materials should provide a variety of appropriate role models of persons with exceptionalities; (8) emphasis should be on uniqueness and worth of all persons, rather than on the differences between persons with and without exceptionalities; and (9) tokenism should be avoided in the representation of persons with exceptionalities. (SBH)

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MAKING LANGUAGE WORK BETTER FOR HANDICAPPED PEOPLE AND EVERYONE ELSE

A Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers

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(Paper to be delivered at the International Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children, April 1979, Dallas, Texas)

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

June B. Mullins

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Introduction

An expert in the area of English usage has stated

> In truth there are no neutral conventions in language any more than there are any "neutral" photographs. The framing of a shot, the angle, the conscious choice to open the shutter now and not later, the choice of settings, film and lighting--all of these guarantee that a photograph will be influenced by human judgment. So it is with language.
>
> The major danger here is that people who use language conventions that relieve them of responsibility for their words and actions will tend increasingly not to assume that responsibility.[1]

This paper has to do with the responsibility the creators of educational materials have toward the significant proportion of our population who are physically or behaviorally different or exceptional.

Background

Recently a pamphlet was prepared by a group of concerned professionals and parents, including handicapped persons, who wished to give guidance to publishers concerned with mainstreaming and normalization of handicapped students. They wrote the following remarks:

> Educational materials have an enormous effect on the formation and reinforcement of behavior and attitudes. A substantial representation of persons with exceptionalities has been omitted from educational materials or has been stereotyped because of a lack of understanding about exceptional persons. Today, more opportunities are available for persons with exceptionalities to participate in the mainstream of society.

[1] Brown, Rexford. The Sins of Educationese. Compact, August 1975.

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The Consortium for Appropriate Representation of Exceptional Persons in Educational Material recognizes that few educational materials have adequately portrayed persons with exceptionalities. This situation needs to be corrected because:

- There are approximately eight million persons in this country with exceptionalities.
- Despite periodic articles or news coverage about persons with exceptionalities, the vast majority are not represented at all.
- Many people do not understand or know how to relate to a person with an exceptionality as a person first and a person with an exceptionality second.
- Probably less than one percent of educational materials represents persons with exceptionalities.

Representation of persons with exceptionalities in educational material appears to exhibit many of the problems evidenced in studies of the treatment of sex roles and of various ethnic and racial groups in similar materials. A growing concern for the fair and adequate representation of persons with exceptionalities, and attention in the education profession to mainstreaming, indicate the need for similar guidelines regarding the treatment of these persons in educational material.

Public Law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, gives a special immediacy to this need. Signed into law November 29, 1975, the law mandates a zero reject policy with regard to the education of persons with exceptionalities. Further, the concept of least restrictive alternatives, as part of the law, reflects the view that the best education for all students is accomplished in an environment that will faciliate the learner's ability to participate in our society. Therefore, it can be expected that more students will have increasing contact with students exhibiting marked human variation in physical, mental, and behavioral attributes in the everyday learning environment.

The intention of these guidelines is to assure that print and nonprint educational materials reflect a positive, fair, and balanced representation of persons with exceptionalities. It is expected that such representation will help all persons with and without exceptionalities to live their lives with a realistic and empathetic understanding of individual differences and abilities.

The guidelines rest on the assumption of the overall similarity of human wants and needs, and the recognition that each individual is unique.[2]

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[2]National Center on Educational Media and Materials for the Handicapped Guidelines for the Representation of Exceptional Persons in Educational Material.

Experiences in the field of social change for other minorities, such as blacks and women, have shown that the most successful thrust is to change the system rather than to try to change attitudes of individuals, either majority or minority members in the system. Such a thrust is made for exceptional persons through court and legislative decisions and subsequent success is a result of compliance to these decrees.

> Public Law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, gives a special immediacy to this need. Signed into law November 29, 1975, the law mandates a zero reject policy with regard to the education of persons with exceptionalities. Further, the concept of least restrictive alternatives, as part of the law, reflects the view that the best education for all students is accomplished in an environment that will facilitate the learner's ability to participate in our society. Therefor, it can be expected that more students will have increasing contact with students exhibiting marked human variation in physical, mental, and behavioral attributes in the everyday learning environment.[3]

The Public Law 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the associated due process included therein represent the legislative thrust on behalf of the handicapped minority. Implementation of the principles in the context of educational materials is an important act of compliance with the law.

Writers', editors', and publishers' guidelines are a step in the right direction since it is the publishers who ultimately decide what is standard written English and what is not.

The Consortium specifically proposed guidelines to

> . . . foster the positive, fair, and balanced representation of exceptional persons in print and nonprint educational materials. The Guidelines are not considered to be all inclusive, but are intended to assist publishers/producers in developing a sensitivity to the manner in which persons with exceptionalities need to be represented.

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[3]National Center on Educational Media and Materials for the Handicapped, Op. cit.

Converting to positive, fair, and balanced representation will not be easy, any more than it was easy to convert to balanced and appropriate sex, ethnic, or social representation.

The following materials are an elaboration and addition to the initial and fundamental effort of establishing guidelines. In this work, attention is paid to the more subtle aspects of language usage to accomplish those ends that we, in the Consortium, had identified.

Guideline 1: In print and nonprint educational materials, ten percent of the contents should include or represent children or adults with an exceptionality.

By a very conservative estimate 10% of school-aged children are significantly handicapped. This figure often astonishes even people in the helping professions, but this figure has been validated in several national surveys. Since this figure was explicitly challenged by some publishers,[4] the following table is included.

Percentages of Handicapped School Aged Children by Disability*

Speech Impaired	3.5%
Emotionally Disturbed	2.0%
Mentally Retarded	2.3%
Learning Disabled	1.0%
Hard of Hearing	0.5%
Deaf	0.075%
Crippled or Other Health Impaired	0.05%
Visually Impaired	0.1%
Multihandicapped	0.06%
TOTAL OF	10%

[4]Fuchs, Victor. Representation of the Handicapped: A Report on the Implementation of the Guidelines for the Representation of Exceptional Persons in Educational Materials. Presentation at the World Congress on Future Special Education, Edinboro, Scotland, June 25, 1978.

Some children in some of the categories listed above could also be classified as gifted or talented. The Bureau of Education of the Handicapped also listed a separate category for this classification, because gifted children are exceptional, also.

They comprise about 2% of the schoolized population and raise the total of exceptional children to over 12%. Because of their special needs and societal attitudes, gifted people may also become handicapped. Therefore, the guidelines are indeed appropriate to apply to this category as well.

As the aging process continues, and as the average age of population increases, more than 10% of the population will be significantly handicapped. Since the impact of handicapping conditions is felt not just by the handicapped individual but by parents, teachers, spouses age mates, and employers, it can be readily seen that exceptionality is a topic of general concern.

Generally, unfair representation of handicapped persons is attributable more to omission than to commission, just as has been the case with reference to sexism.[5] It is more the case that handicapped or different people are invisible; they have limited representation.

Guideline 2: Representation of persons with exceptionalities be included in materials at all levels (early childhood through adult) and in all areas of study, such as:

Career Education,
Guidance,
Health Studies,
Language Arts,
Mathematics,

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*Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, 1960, 70. (from previous page)

[5]APA Task Force on Issues of Sexual Bias in Graduate Education. Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language. American Psychologist, June 1975.

Physical Education,
Science,
Social Studies,
Vocational Education

Inspection of educational materials leads to the conclusion that misrepresentation of exceptional persons is more attributable to omission than to commission; for example, the infrequent presentation of handicapped people as subject matter is more noticeable than bias and misrepresentation within the material that is presented. The first inclination of people who are revising texts to reflect the guidelines is probably to begin to include handicapped children in pictures of pupils in the classroom. (In like manner, the first attempt at inclusion of non-white representation in texts was to color the faces of a few students dark.) If only children are depicted as having differences, however, we can ask what ever happens to them when they grow up? If they are still relegated to invisibility as adults, the effort has raised false hopes and is perhaps worse than no representation at all. If handicapped children are part of the school community, it can be assumed that they will grow up to be part of the social and work community. A certain number do in fact become teachers, administrators, janitors, and cafeteria workers in the school community, and should be represented just as handicapped children are.

Since handicapped people exist in all walks of life and have been contributors in all fields of human endeavor, it would seem logical that they would quite naturally be represented in educational texts. Yet how often does the disabled student sit in a social studies class which never mentions handicapped persons, or sees a host of role models, none of which are like himself. (Or, if the illustrious

person was indeed disabled, the fact has been glossed over.) The little disabled child who reads books in which the heroes are always sound in body and average in behavior may not need to wait for an encounter with bias in a professional school to know he or she should leave aspirations to abled bodied peers.

As the Carnegie Quarterly so aptly states

> Children learn their place in the world not just from their home and school but from the larger society, and this knowledge is reinforced through toys and books, movies, and television. No child is too small to pick up the clues--intentional slurs and subtle suggestions--that just as surely tell what blacks, Native Americans, Chicanos, or just plain men and women are and do--and thus what they can't become or can't accomplish.
>
> Books, perhaps children's books most of all, are powerful tools by which a civilization perpetuates its values--both its proudest achievements and its most crippling prejudices. In books children find characters with whom they identify and whose aspirations and actions they might one day try to emulate; they discover, too, a way of perceiving those who are of a different color, who speak a different language or live a different life. Heroic epics, schoolbook histories, timeless fairy tales all help to inspire pride and ambition, fear and defeatism.[6]

It is relatively easy to include actual units which include or even feature various aspects of being a handicapped person.

For example, a unit on sports can cover the development of sports for people who compensate in many ways. Wheelchair sports will figure prominently. The special olympics will be documented. Skiers and horsemen from the National Matter of Inconvenience Group will find easy inclusion.

In scientific and technical materials examples pertinent to disabling conditions may be the most appropriate ones.

Hardware of prostheses and communicative devices are fascinating to study and exemplary of the advanced science and technology of the

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[6]Carnegie Quarterly, Fall 1974, 22(4). Carnegie Corporation of New York.

space age. For example, one can explain workings of the hearing aid as a science or electronics project. Surgical and medical procedures associated with various impairments and conditions beautifully illustrate biological principles. One can use artificial limbs and other prosthetic devices for illustrations in areas of physics, engineering, physical education, and hygiene. Courses in family life, ethics, and social studies are actually incomplete without consideration of human variation, ways of coping with adversity and social management of deviance. Here one could show the design of a community or building totally accessible to persons with handicaps, for example.

In language arts a unit on communication would not be complete without consideration of a codified gesture system such as American. Sign Language.

In career education and vocational education the contributions for and by handicapped persons are legion. The influence on the inventor of the telephone by his deaf wife is of fascinating interest, as is the story of the development of the Optacon by the father of a blind daughter, or the invention of a valved shunt by the father of a child with spina bifida. Contributions by handicapped persons will be discussed more in relation to Guideline 7 and the development of appropriate role models.

In order to effect this guideline and the other guidelines as well, it would seem that collegial representation of handicapped people needs to be greatly increased. How many publishers, editors, writers, curriculum specialists, reviewers know first hand the realities of the fact of exceptionality? Inclusion must begin at the planning level in the publishing industry itself and in the professions.

Guideline 3: The representation of persons with exceptionalities should be accurate and free from stereotypes.

The Consortium asks

Are you aware that each exceptionality has varying degrees of severity?

Have you represented the deaf as dumb; the blind as pitiful; the intellectual as bookwormish; the mentally retarded person as poorly groomed, as unkempt, or as the "fool"?

We are living in a time of great social change. The accelerating rate of change makes any reliance on past myths and stereotypes particularly dangerous. Stereotyped allusions almost inevitable call up stereotyped images. Texts should avoid unwarranted generalizations about handicapped people in general and about people with categories of handicapping conditions in particular.

Speaking of people as "the handicapped" or "the disabled" implies a monolythic group. Since it is a fact that even the most variable people are more alike than different, that is, more alike in their humanness than they are different in their individual characteristics, it is better to speak of people with a particular disability or better still, a person with a particular disability.

Handicapped people are not always grateful, sweet, passive, and compliant, although sometimes society would apparently like to see them so. As the first question implies, stereotyping also occurs with respect to individual categories themselves. For example, few blind people lack all vision, use guide dogs, are musicians. It is unrealistic to present them in these roles exclusively.

It is a common unfortunate habit of professionals in the helping professions to speak of "C.P.'s" or "quads" or "trainables" probably

because these individuals come into professional purview chiefly because of these exceptionalities. This kind of stereotypic language encourages us to typify a person by his or her one most negative attribute rather than by the myriad of other and positive qualities that persons who have cerebral palsy, quadriplegia, or a classification of mental retardation will possess.

Therefore, references should not be to "a cripple" or "a psychotic" but rather to individuals, hopefully using descriptions rather than labels. The use of tenacious, salacious, or questionable derogatory associations should be avoided. The use of the diminutive as in "the little lame prince," the little blind girl, or Tiny Tim is at least patronizing. Likewise expressions like "the happy dwarf" convey a subtle, guilt relieving nuance of condescension. Worse of course is an all too frequent tendency to associate devalued roles with exceptionalities as "the blind beggar," "the disfigured villian," or "the insane criminal." Descriptive detail should be the most personal and the least stereotyping information which is conveyed about an individual.

Guideline 4: Persons with exceptionalities should be shown in the least restrictive environment. They should be shown participating in activities in a manner that will include them as part of society.

The purpose of this guideline is to overcome the impression presently embedded in educational materials that all people are average, and that most social and career roles are exclusive to average people. The impression must be overcome in present educational materials that all people are healthy, physically whole, and look and act within this narrowly defined "ideal average" appearance and behavior, (albeit that

these persons now may be of both sexes, have different skin colors, and may appear in urban as well as suburban settings.)

The Consortium asks

> Are all deaf persons shown only in the company of other deaf persons?
>
> Are all retarded persons shown in institutions, or going places only in groups?
>
> Does your material reflect the idea that persons with exceptionalities cannot function in the mainstream of society?

It suggests that texts can show persons with speech disorders who still work in radio stations, writing scripts, or scheduling programs, for example. Persons with exceptionalities do in fact work in a variety of occupations such as: typesetters, lithographers, truck drivers, industrial workers, artists, authors, public servants. In most texts the most acceptable social and vocational roles are automatically linked to the "ideal average".

Writers in the popular press often affect great surprise when they find that disabled individuals are entirely capable of taking roles and performing jobs that are assumed by able bodied persons. This "gee whiz" tone of writing is a veiled insult because it assumes the accomplishments of the handicapped persons under discussion are flukes of nature and only noteworthy because of their extreme improbability. This tone creeps into many "first disabled person on the job" stories.

A dangerous practice is attributing motivation to handicapped persons as a group. One handicapped woman has said, "All I want to do is keep my house and raise my children without having people resent me". Such a legitimate wish of one person cannot be generalized to include all or most handicapped women.

The movitations and aspirations of handicapped people will be as varied as for any group if they are given equal opportunity. It has been said of a number of minority groups, "Give them an inch and they want a mile." If the mile is the right of the majority group, it is the right of the minority group. Equal rights are not given by one to another. They are a birthright mandated by law.

The guidelines apply to illustrations as well as written language. For example, in the case of pictures representing people in general, it should not be assumed that people in general possess the physical and health characteristics of some ideal average. Artists should be particularly sensitive to pictures that might be degrading to handicapped persons.

Guideline 5: In describing persons with exceptionalities, the language used should be nondiscriminatory and free from value judgments.

This guideline is of crucial importance to writers of educational texts. Some rules are helpful in at least working toward this goal.

"Remember that the writer has an attitude, the language used broadcasts an attitude, and the message is received by a reader with an attitude which will be either confirmed, challenged, or altered."[7]

Language can be used to maximize positive attributes of handicapped persons. Whereas negative attributes of impairments and disabilities and deviance are rampant in our language and to some extent in literature and curriculum, positive attributes are not often described. Curriculum specialists and authors should make

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[7] Kitt, Merriellyn and Underwood, Virginia. How to avoid sexism - A guide for writers, editors, and publishers. Lawrence Ragan Communication, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, 1978.

an explicit, strenuous effort to include positive aspects of disability associated characteristics.

A pitfall to be avoided is a patronizing attitude, which has perhaps been best (or worst) imbedded in an old charity model of viewing exceptional persons.

Writers can minimize invidious associations. The negative association of impairments with negative and moralistic affective states in describing normal situations and persons is habitual in English language. While it would be impossible and perhaps even undesirable to irradicate this colorful language, at least writers should be sensitive to their use of these highly charged words and their impact on the groups whose characteristics they denigrate as well as on "normal" people. They need to be doubly sensitive to the effect of these concepts on developing young children in a teaching-learning context. Examples of these somewhat invidious expressions (which are no doubt endless) are given below by categories of disabilities:

Common Expressions

Emotional problems

Are you crazy?
Mad scientist
Out of my senses
A soft touch
Nutty behavior
Became unhinged

Blemishes

Needle nose
Blemished character
Mines pock marked the terrain
Nose out of joint

Cognitive insufficiency

A dumb act
Dumb bunny
An idiotic pose
A moronic delivery
A ding a ling
A ree tard
Lame brain
Halting speech
A fool's way
Dim wit
Simpleton
Bird brain
He's a cretin

Seizures

Had a fit over it
Convulsed with laughter
Pitch a fit
Foamed at the mouth with rage

Health problems

A sick comedian
A cancer in the presidency
Dead beat
Dead end
Intellectual anemia
Brittle personality
A bleeding heart
A pox on your house
The bad disease
Dead wood
A bloody dead
Sick joke
A weak excuse
Thin skinned
Toothless hag
Limp as a rag
90 lb. weakling

Unusual (usually short) stature

A dwarfed personality
You came up short
Were short changed
Runt of the litter
A little man
A shrimp

Tall tales
He's a long drink of water

Orthopedic handicaps

Crippled by the strike
Crooked deals
A lame excuse
Lame duck candidates
One armed bandit
A basket case
Twisted logic
Hobbled by his parents
Pidgeon toed
Plane limped in
A spineless person
Winter paralized the city

Hearing Impairments

Turn a deaf ear
"Mocks the dull ear of time"
Deaf to reason

Visual Impairments

Lacking vision
A short sighted decision
Blind to the possibilities
A myopic point of view
A narrow focus
Blind rage
Four eyes
Go in with eyes wide open
Seeing is believing
Peeping Tom
Lacks foresight
Evil eye
Eye sore
Dirty look
Blind faith
Blind as a bat
Fish eye
Cold look
Shopping sight unseen

It is probably true that if ordinary people become more familiar with the actual impairments, which the words above describe, the words themselves will lose or least change some of their affective tone and colorfulness. "Crippled" or "blind" does not mean the same thing to someone who has a vague notion of an unknown, therefore, feared or bad

or diseased state. This kind of process has occurred with many other kinds of words, such as Red Chinese, Jews, Alcoholism, Feminist, the Poor, where appropriate, realistic affect is substituted for primal, unconscious affect, when individuals have the occasion for knowledge and proximity concerning these subjects.

Assigning identity on the basis of the one stereotyping negative characteristic can be avoided. Consider the differences in nuances of meaning in the following sentence pairs:

Alvin, a blind man, is a musician.
The musician, Alvin, is blind.
Jeannie, who is hard of hearing, has to use a hearing aid.
Jeannie can hear very well by using a hearing aid.

Why is a person confined to a wheelchair, signifying "restriction", "imprisonment", or restraint, rather than uses a wheelchair, signifying "using something for a purpose, ability, power, or right to use".[8]

Why does a person "suffer" epilepsy, which signifies experience of something painful or unpleasant, rather than the more neuter words "experience seizures".

Consider the positive coping aspects of handicapped persons who are suggested in the following examples: "Confronted by raucous din of the children, Uncle Jim slyly turned down his hearing aid." "Jim slipped the hook of his artificial arm under the handle of the pot and deftly lifted it up from the engulfing flames of the campfire." "During the power outage blind Harold, finally a hero, led everyone on his dorm floor down the blackened corridors to the dining room." (This is actually a true story.)

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[8]The Penguin Dictionary of English. Penguin Books, Baltimore, Md., 1964.

Guideline 6: Persons with exceptionalities and persons without exceptionalities should be shown interacting in ways that are mutually beneficial.

The Consortium asks

Are the persons with exceptionalities always shown being helped by others rather than vice versa?

Have your materials shown positive interpersonal relationships between persons with and without exceptionalities?

Do your materials show how persons with and without exceptionalities can communicate naturally, without embarrassing awkwardness?

In many ways this is the most important guideline and yet perhaps it is the least understood in terms of deep fundamental implications.

Most of the guidelines focus on fairness and benefit to handicapped individuals. However, a society with justice, respect, and inclusion is the best situation for all people--it is my understanding that this is the political and religious ideal which undergirds the American way of life.

When racial segregation was practiced in the South, bad though the situation was for black Americans, it was far more damaging to the fabric of the total southern society. Similarly, discrimination against disabled persons has an insidious effect on everyone: our views of our own weaknesses as well as those of others, our feelings about our own aging processes, our fears for the possible fates of our friends, spouses, and offspring, as well as our own uncertain futures.

The whole charity model, whose vestiges still cling to our professionalism, emphasize doing for and to rather than doing with. While no writer of educational texts at this date would probably dare show children taking Christmas baskets of food to the poor, a writer might show children taking toys or games to a friend bedridden or

housebound. How fine it would be to expand that scene to show the gift of the disabled child to the others: a painting (perhaps by mouth), a homemade table game, a story to tell, some knitted gloves. The guideline stresses the benefit of mutuality and open and respectful encounter between peers with varying characteristics.

It may be useful to discuss changing attitudes toward exceptional individuals. The subject of past discrimination and prejudice is an unfortunate one. The cause of fairness and balance in representation is not served by preoccupation on past injustice and inequities. Nevertheless, the attitudes of handicapped people toward their roles in school and society should not be neglected. Educational materials can strike a matter of fact tone, concentrating on current progress and future goals rather than past discrimination. An important additional technique would be exploring the attitudes of able-bodied individuals toward the changing options for handicapped persons.

The writer or editor does have a responsibility both to handicapped and able-bodied persons to be sure the long term interests of both groups are fairly represented. While some people of both groups may find degradating (i.e. "sick") jokes and references about exceptionalities amusing, it is here suggested that such allusions or humor are as offensive as ethnic slurs or racist jokes.

Guideline 7: Materials should provide a variety of appropriate role models of persons with exceptionalities.

The Consortium asks

Have you explored the full range of jobs that persons with exceptionalities do perform or have you limited yourself to a narrow range of occupations?

Have you ever depicted persons with exceptionalities as parents, community leaders, or business executives?

Do you depict the typical achiever, as well as the super achiever, as a role model?

Role typing can be diminished by the author's choice of examples, such as portraying disabled people as bread winners, parents, and spouses. Also such processes as the development of career choice or child care behaviors need not be specific to the "ideal" norm.

Caution has to be exercised with regard to sex stereotyping of handicapped people in their roles. Special educators themselves have been guilty of this practice, particularly in career education.

With some justification they have felt that they are lucky if they can get a handicapped person into any employment, so they will not fight the battle of perpetuation of sex typing or race typing. Creators of educational materials can successfully meet these multiple challenges: for example, they can portray a deaf, white programmer, or they can portray a deaf, black programmer. They can show a female on crutches shopping in the grocery store with a child in the cart, or a male doing the same.

As with sex stereotypes, it is easy to fall prey to the subtle manifestation of degradation which social prejudice engenders in devalued groups. For example, those describing disabled people or sometimes disabled people, male or female, themselves feel compelled to report that their spouses are normal or how many normal children they have produced, possibly as a vindication of their own imperfect state. Why should they have had to feel accused in the first place? Why should procreation be essential to self worth for them any more than for others?

Women may well relate to this tendency since it has been used to identify the virtuous female by the parenthetical insertion of the number of her offspring or the role of grandmother or wife in a description.

The test to apply is, would you insert this information if the person was an able-bodied white man? If not, it should be omitted.

Not enough emphasis has been put on the fact that many of the notable contributors in literature, the arts, science, philosophy, and politics, etc. have been individuals who have lived with a host of physical and behavioral abnormalities. These are interesting to note and actually have had an influence on the lives and work of many of these men and women. One might even speculate if the careers of such people as Helen Keller, Henry Viscardi, or Franklin Roosevelt would have been so illustrious, or at least followed the same path, if they had not been handicapped.

If it is appropriate at some point to discuss an individual's physical, behavioral, or medical situation, this can be done thoroughly and matter of factly in a section specifically addressing those points. Other sections can discuss other aspects of that person's life and work. Further connections between those kinds of information need not be made unless the first characteristics have a specific relationship to subsequent behavior.

While famous disabled people are indeed fine role models for handicapped young people, they should not be the only ones. Most people, able-bodied or not, will never achieve imminence. Therefore, just as with other individuals, handicapped youngsters should be given role models who are ordinary citizens, pursuing a wide number of career options.

Guideline 8: Emphasis should be on uniqueness and worth of all persons, rather than on the differences between persons with and without exceptionalities.

The Consortium asks

> Do your materials foster the appreciation of similarities between persons with and without exceptionalities?

Further,

> Does your material foster the attitude of "one of them" as opposed to "one of us"?

Our language should imply that deviancies, disabilities, and differences are a part of, not a part from, our common society and our common human condition.

We could say, "Blind people learn to compensate for their lack of vision by learning to utilize their other intact senses more efficiently," or we could say, "When we lack or lose the sense of vision, we learn to utilize our other intact senses more efficiently."

As Erving Goffman states, "The most fortunate of normals is likely to have his half-hidden failing and for every little failing there is a social occasion when it will loom large, creating a shameful gap between virtual and actual social identity."[9]

Further, Goffman discusses the precariousness of "normalcy", which one can so suddenly and easily lose through mishap or misfortune, causing "merely a new alignment within an old frame of reference and a taking to himself in detail what he had known about as residing in others. The painfulness, then, of sudden stigmatization can come not from the individual's confusion about his identity, but from his knowing too well what he has become." The fair and balanced representation of

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[9]Goffman, Erving. Stigma notes on the management of a spoiled identity. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1963.

deviant and exceptional roles, in the end, is important to all of us.

Children can learn fear and uncertainty with regard to the differences of others and perceived weaknesses in themselves, or they can learn mutual understanding, support, and coping techniques that will help develop empathetic and confident individuals as well as a richer more interesting society.

The Consortium asks

> Does your use of labels set persons with exceptionalities unnecessarily apart from others, in a manner such as "Sally, Anne, and Robert, their blind friend"?

Any technique which calls attention to the fact that a human being is handicapped can come out sounding patronizing.

The dilemma of the writer is to communicate that a person who is different is included (therefore being represented as stipulated in Guideline 1) without having the handicap of the person become an issue which interferes with the primary message being communicated.

The sensitive writer, editor, and publisher must search for means to lessen these problems. Parenthetical asides must be used with great care. When handicapped people are described, the description should show respect for them. The parenthetical aside indicating disability may add an important dimension to the description and should be used to do so. However, a writer should be aware that a parenthetical aside can speak volumes in attitude and undo a well meant description.

Use of irrelevant demographic information such as physical appearance, state of health, or medical classification should be avoided in the same way that race, sex, and religion, when irrelevant, are omitted.

One would not say, "John, a Catholic, was told that he had won the contest as soon as he entered the office." One should not say, "John, a paraplegic, etc." for the same reasons. However, the writer can't further the Guidelines and represent a disabled person fairly unless the reader is made aware that John is indeed paraplegic.

A more delicate, subtle way to proceed might be to say, "John was told that he had won the contest as soon as he wheeled his chair into the office "

The use of parallel construction rather than dependent clauses or compound sentences may be helpful in some specific cases. For example, consider the subtle degradation in the following two constructions:

> Although he is crippled, he is a great violinist. He is paraplegic, but he has achieved fame as a musician.

These constructions imply that usually disabled and musician are mutually exclusive.

It would probably be better to talk about the man's musicianship separately from his disability so a reader is not required to make inferences about musical achievement and disability, but rather learns about one person with very specific characteristics.

Guideline 9: Tokenism should be avoided in the representation of persons with exceptionalities.

The Consortium asks

> If your materials do represent exceptional persons, have you limited the exceptionalities to deaf, blind, or physically handicapped?

Have any of your materials included the following conditions?

> Behavioral Problems
> Giftedness
> Hearing Impairments
> Learning Disabilities

Mental Retardation
Multiple Handicaps
Neurological Problems
Physical Handicaps
Serious Emotional Problems

Perhaps it would be well to underscore another category, Age Related problems. Few other groups have been so stereotyped as the little old white haired Grandma and Grandpa.

This guideline is probably the most difficult one to put into practice, and the Consortium was well aware of this. In fact, it was suggested that representation of some kinds of impairments and disabilities might be counter productive to the persons who possess them. There was some question whether it would be beneficial to portray persons with skin blemishes, protheses such as hooks, behavior that would clearly indicate mental retardation, or non-fluent speech.

Because of this uncertainty the writer sought the cooperation of the President's Committee to survey some handicapped individuals and parents as to their thoughts and preferences. The results of this survey showed overwhelmingly agreement that all human variations, physical and behavioral, should be represented in educational materials.

When very different kinds of persons and behaviors are depicted instead of ignored as if they don't exist, people may respond with deep seated feelings and disquieting, emotional, and attitudinal conflicts may be involved. The resolution of these conflicts may require changing fundamental human understandings, relationships, and social systems. This can be very disturbing but also very challenging.

In dealing with children in an educational context there is the delightful opportunity to formulate realistic, healthy attitudes rather than have to change intrenched ignorant, negative ones. It

can be expected that some of the issues that seem to present problems to adults will actually be easy for children to accept. Research on the acceptance by young children of human differences already bears this out. It is suggested here that it is good business to bring these topics out in the open, and begin with children in their formative period.

When educators develop educational materials, they can be sure of avoiding out-moded prejudicial language and presumptions if two general rules are kept in mind: Do not insult handicapped individuals gratuitiously and do not exclude them. Handicapped people are part of today's school and society. Educational materials can and should reflect this fact in a fair and objective manner.